

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS DON KNABE AND
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

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The number of children diagnosed with autism, known clinically as Autism Spectral Disorders has exploded over the past 17 years. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, this number has gone from 1 in 10,000 in 1993, to 1 in 110 children in 2010.

Diagnosis and treatment of autism has been shown to be most effective when addressed in the early developmental years, ideally during the toddler and preschool years and close to the time when they transition from preschool to kindergarten. However, such transitions across systems and programs are especially difficult for these children. The California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism reported that a significant number of families confront major barriers in accessing and navigating programs and services, including case management, speech therapy, physical therapy and social skills training. This challenge is even more prevalent for children in low-income communities that the First 5 Los Angeles Commission purport to be most concerned about. While the Commission has funded efforts to provide support for families impacted by autism, we believe that more can be done.

WE THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors send a formal request to the First 5 Los Angeles Commission to consider an annual allotment of funding to address systemic challenges facing families with autistic children under age 5, and to also identify both current as well as additional opportunities for the Commission to address the autism epidemic.

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